UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.183/PV.192
18 January 1993

ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF
THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 192nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 10 November 1992, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. CISSE (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): Today the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is holding a solemn meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, of 2 December 1977.

It is my pleasure and honour to welcome His Excellency Mr. Stoyan Ganev, President of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. André Erdös, President of the Security Council, His Excellency Mr. Stanley Kalpagé, Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and His Excellency Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, Head of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization, representative of Palestine. I should also like to welcome representatives of Member States, intergovernmental organizations and liberation movements, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations, members of the press and all those who have accepted the Committee's invitation to participate in this solemn meeting.

I now invite everyone here to rise and observe a minute of silence in memory of all those who have given their lives for the cause of the Palestinian people.

The participants observed a minute of silence.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I should like now to make a statement on behalf of the Committee.

Today we are commemorating the forty-fifth anniversary of the adoption by

(The Chairman)

the General Assembly of resolution 181 (II), which partitioned historic Palestine and called for the creation of two independent States, one Arab and one Jewish, joined in economic union, and for a special international regime for Jerusalem.

That resolution, which embodied the General Assembly's recognition of the existence and rights of two peoples in Palestine, provides the foundation for the creation of the State of Israel and for the rightful claim of the Palestinian people to the establishment of its own State alongside Israel. The fact that, after so many years and the shedding of so much blood in this conflict, the Palestinian State has not yet come into being does not negate the wisdom and practicality of that resolution. It demonstrates, rather, the lack of political will and far-sightedness of those concerned, and the continuing hold of an ideology of recourse to military power rather than negotiations to resolve political conflicts.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people has traditionally held this annual commemoration to remind the international community of its unfulfilled promise to the Palestinian people and to appeal to it to renew its pledge to bring about this objective. The world of today is a vastly different one from that of 45 years ago, or even of a few years ago. There is an increasing consensus in the international community that conflicts should be resolved through political means in accordance with international law and the principles of humanitarian law, as well as an increasing willingness and ability to take joint measures to enforce its decisions. On this occasion, we need to reaffirm the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with respect to the question of Palestine until the question can be resolved in all its aspects in accordance with those principles.

(The Chairman)

Our commemoration today also provides a forum for reflection on the opportunities as well as dangers inherent in the current peace process and the lack so far of substantive results more than a year after it began. It is clear that the parties concerned, and indeed the international community as a whole, must intensify their efforts to break through the impasse and advance towards a just settlement in accordance with United Nations resolutions. Only such a settlement can in fact meet the needs and aspirations of all the peoples of the region and bring about a lasting peace. It is also necessary to reaffirm the urgent need for measures to defuse the continuing tension and violence in the region, which are exacerbated by the dynamic of occupation and repression.

Our Committee stresses once again that the restoration of respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Palestinians living in the occupied territory, and for the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, is a fundamental obligation of the occupying Power on which the international community must continue to insist. Measures in this regard would also contribute to creating a climate more conducive to peace. The confiscation of land and the building of settlements; the use of firearms to deal with demonstrators and the selective killings of Palestinian militants; the curfews and restrictions on freedom of movement and association; the continued detention of thousands of persons and their ill-treatment and even torture; the use of deportations and collective punishment; the separation of thousands of families; the continued imposition of unjust military orders; and the fetters imposed on the economic development of the occupied territory must cease if a meaningful peace process is to move forward.

In numerous resolutions, the United Nations and in particular the Security Council, have expressed the consensus of the international community

(The Chairman)

with regard to the legal obligations of Israel, the occupying Power, under the Fourth Geneva Convention and have called for the implementation of its provisions. The continued disregard of the occupying Power for these decisions undermines the authority and credibility of these legal standards and those charged with enforcing them. The Committee firmly believes that it is the right of the international community to take action in order to ensure respect for the Convention and to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people living under occupation, regardless of whether or not there are peace negotiations under way.

There are many obvious measures that the occupying Power can take immediately in order to demonstrate its good will and readiness for peace, and without jeopardizing its security, and we call once again on the Government of Israel to act immediately to end the repression, restore respect for human rights, roll back the occupation, and take concrete measures to improve the living conditions of the Palestinians.

For its part, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will continue to do its utmost in accordance with its mandate to contribute to the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement based on respect for the norms of international law, the United Nations Charter and relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as to promote international action in support of the rights and needs of the Palestinian people.

As we commemorate today the anniversary of the historic decision partitioning Palestine, let us recommit ourselves to its implementation and to solidarity with the Palestinian people until its historic and just objective - sovereignty and freedom in its own land - is finally achieved.

(The Chairman)

I now have the pleasure to call on the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Stoyan Ganev.

Mr. GANEV (President of the General Assembly): May I first of all express to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People my appreciation for having been invited to take part in this important observance.

Recognizing the need to strengthen and consolidate international support for the Palestinian people, the General Assembly by its resolution 32/40 B requested the annual observance of 29 November, the anniversary of the adoption of resolution 181 (II), which partitioned Palestine, as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. In commemorating this occasion, therefore, the international community is renewing its pledge to the Palestinian people that their just demands and aspirations will continue to have the firm support of the international community.

The question of Palestine has been a major concern of the United Nations practically since its establishment and remains the longest-lasting unresolved conflict on our agenda, posing a constant threat to peace and security in the region and draining its resources. The Organization bears a historical responsibility towards ensuring the just settlement of this question, based on full restoration of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, in accordance with the principles of the Charter and United Nations resolutions.

The far-reaching changes in the international arena and in the Middle East region itself in the past few years have brought this objective closer than ever before. It is now increasingly recognized by all concerned that the United Nations has an essential and constructive contribution to make, both in terms of facilitating the peace process and any arrangements resulting from it and in terms of providing the needed assistance for development.

(Mr. Ganev, President, General Assembly)

The General Assembly has welcomed the convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, sponsored by the United States of America and the former Soviet Union, for the achievement of a comprehensive peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The fact that an invitation was recently extended to the United Nations to attend, as a full extraregional participant, the meetings of three working groups on regional issues is also to be welcomed. The ongoing peace process constitutes a significant step towards the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. It is to be hoped that the spirit of good will and mutual respect that has characterized the bilateral and multilateral meetings thus far will continue in the future and that the talks will soon lead to positive and concrete results. We understand that such a complex, difficult and long-lasting conflict will take time to resolve. However, the dangers inherent in a continuing stalemate and in the accumulation of frustrated hopes and needs clearly impose on all concerned the need to intensify their efforts to advance towards a just settlement.

Pending such a settlement, however, I should like to remind this Committee that numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council have called for the restoration of respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Palestinians living in the occupied territory, including Jerusalem, in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Measures in this regard not only are required under various international instruments to which Israel is a party, but would also contribute to creating a climate more conducive to peace. We hope the Government of Israel will re-examine its policies and practices towards the Palestinians living under occupation, which have resulted in an increasingly intolerable situation,

(Mr. Ganev, President, General Assembly)

and will take the necessary measures to bring an end to the suffering and hardships the Palestinian people have endured for more than 25 years.

Before concluding, I should like to congratulate the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Chairman, His Excellency Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé of Senegal, for their continuing efforts to promote a peaceful solution of the Palestine question in accordance with international principles and United Nations resolutions. The observance of this Day will certainly inspire hope in the minds and hearts of the Palestinians and convey to them once again that the United Nations remains committed to their just cause and the realization of their inalienable rights. I take this opportunity to extend to you, Mr. Chairman, and the Committee my best wishes for success in your important endeavours.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): It is now my honour to call on His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I am honoured to participate, for the first time since taking office as Secretary-General, in this important observance held under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People symbolizes the continuing responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine and its commitment to the promotion of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. I attach the greatest importance to the achievement of peace in the region and will do my utmost in this regard.

(The Secretary-General)

It is widely agreed that three elements are basic to the desired settlement: first, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Arab territories occupied since June 1967; secondly, acknowledgement of and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States in the region, including Israel, and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; and, thirdly, a satisfactory solution of the Palestinian problem based on the recognition of the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination. In this connection, the question of Jerusalem remains of primary importance.

(The Secretary-General)

The continuing escalation of violence in the Middle East and the resulting loss of life by innocent civilians is of deep concern. The prolongation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has caused so much suffering to the peoples of the region and has held back their economic development, is in no one's interest.

I welcome the peace initiative launched at the Madrid peace conference a year ago. I am following with great attention current efforts to achieve, in the words of the letter of invitation to the Conference, "a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement through direct negotiations on two tracks, between Israel and the Arab States, and between Israel and the Palestinians". This process has the support of the parties concerned and has as its framework Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). These negotiations prove that dialogue is possible.

The United Nations is ready to assist the participants in achieving and building a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region. I am, therefore, pleased to accept the invitation extended to the United Nations to attend, as a full extra-regional participant, the multilateral negotiations of the Middle East peace talks. Last week, I designated Ambassador Chinmaya Gharekhan of India as my Special Representative. Ambassador Gharekhan will coordinate the United Nations role in the Working Groups on Arms Control and Regional Security, on Water, Environment, Economic and Regional Development, and on Refugees.

It is hoped that the current peace process will result in agreements that will satisfy the needs and aspirations of all the parties concerned, and allow the Palestinian people to realize their inalienable rights. This unprecedented and historic opportunity should not be missed. The situation

(The Secretary-General)

calls for a spirit of compromise and mutual building of confidence towards the achievement of the common objective of true peace in the Middle East.

(spoke in French)

Ever since December 1987, tension has been constant. Hundreds of people have been killed, houses have been destroyed, and Palestinians have been forced to leave the towns and villages where they had lived for generations.

Consequently, it is of the greatest importance that we ensure implementation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention to all the territories that have been occupied since June 1967. The international community has time and time again declared that the Geneva Convention was applicable to occupied territories. Time and again it has called on Israel to respect its obligations as the occupying Power. The principal Contracting Parties to the Convention have the duty to ensure that the provisions of the Convention are fully respected in the occupied territories. The credibility of the Convention is at stake, as is that of international law.

Declarations of intention and resolutions, when they are never actually put into effect, do not serve peace. They only heighten resentment and fuel criticism of international action in the service of the loftiest ideals. The very things we stand for are in jeopardy.

In resolution 681 (1990), the Security Council of the United Nations gave the Secretary-General a mandate. Long committed as I have been to peace action in that part of the world, I am determined to do my utmost to put each of its terms into effect.

(spoke in Arabic)

In conclusion, I should like to extend my thanks to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. I wish to

(The Secretary-General)

state that I shall work in support of this Committee. Let me reiterate that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East can be achieved only if the Palestinian people is able to exercise its right to self-determination.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I thank His Excellency Mr. Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General, for his inspiring statement and his efforts to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, and for his support of the Committee's work.

I now call on Mr. André Erdös, President of the Security Council.

Mr. ERDŐS (President of the Security Council): Allow me first of all to give my heartiest thanks to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for having invited me, as President of the Security Council, to participate in this special meeting marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

It is for me both a pleasure and a privilege to join in this important annual event, which expresses solidarity with the Palestinian people and the enduring commitment of the international community to the achievement of a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East question. We remain ever mindful that efforts to reach this goal represent not only the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, but also the possibility of bringing stability to a particularly troubled region of the world, thereby fostering international peace and security.

As is well known, the Security Council has been closely associated with the persistent efforts to forge an equitable solution to the Middle East situation. It has been called upon many times to direct its urgent attention to the crises engendered by the conflict and its consequences. The members of

(Mr. Erdös, President, Security Council)

the Security Council reaffirm the need for scrupulous observance of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which is fully applicable to all the occupied territories. In so doing, the Council has always been aware of the magnitude of the Palestinian problem, and it remains seized of many aspects of the situation in the Middle East, including the question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights. For its part, therefore, the Security Council will continue to devote attention to the problem with a view to seeking a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for the peoples of the region as a whole.

As President of the Council, I followed with keen interest, as I am sure all members of the Council did, the developments of the past year in the bilateral and multilateral peace talks arising from the Madrid peace conference convened on 30 October 1991.

(Mr. Erdös, President, Security Council)

The process in place represents a new beginning, a new opportunity to establish a mechanism capable of building a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. It is particularly gratifying that the parties involved support efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement through direct negotiations based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

This promising process - memorable for the fact that for the first time all parties to the conflict, including the representatives of the Palestinian people, took an active part in the process - gives reason to hope that the peace talks will continue to tackle the important substantive issues that lie ahead on the road to peace. The members of the Security Council call on all the parties involved in the peace process launched at Madrid to cooperate in efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement and, in particular, a solution to the Palestinian problem in all its aspects.

As President of the Council - and I am sure this is true of all members of the Council - I am also particularly gratified that the United Nations was recently invited to participate as a full extra-regional participant in the multilateral talks. Thus United Nations representatives have participated in recent multilateral meetings on the environment, economic development, and refugees.

Guided by the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter, the Security Council will continue its efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East for the benefit of all parties concerned, including the Palestinian people.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I call now on Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, who will read out a message from His Excellency President Yasser Arafat.

Mr. AL-KIDWA (Palestine) (interpretation from Arabic): I have the honour to convey to you, Mr. Chairman, the message of President Yasser Arafat, President of the State of Palestine and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, on the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People:

"In the name of our Palestinian people, my brother members of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and in my own name, I would like to express to you my highest appreciation and deepest thanks for inviting me to attend your august meeting and for your lofty work and the efforts you are making in support of our people's struggle to regain and exercise their inalienable rights. I would like also to express my deepest thanks and gratitude to all friends at the United Nations for the efforts they are exerting in explaining to the public and furthering the just cause of Palestine and the just cause of the Palestinian people.

"I seize this opportunity also to express to His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, our deepest thanks and appreciation for his persistent efforts towards implementing the resolutions of the United Nations and its Charter on all levels, in all fields and in all areas, including the Middle East, due to

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

the great influence of the Middle East issue and its central cause, the question of Palestine, on international security and stability.

"The observance by the international community of this day of solidarity with the just struggle of the Palestinnian people to regain their inalienable national rights is an expression of the international community's desire to find a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and to enable our people to regain and exercise these inalienable national rights, including the right to return, to self-determination and to establish their independent state, with Holy Jerusalem as its capital. It is also an occasion that embodies the meaning of international solidarity with our people, who have suffered greatly ever since the start of their tragedy over four decades ago.

"More than a year has passed since the start of the process of negotiations which began in Madrid at the end of October of last year. As you know, we in the Palestine Liberation Organization were among those who exerted the most efforts to facilitate and ensure the start of this process and make it a tangible reality, when we accepted participating in it despite its unjust conditions. Our participation in this process, however, was made in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the constitutional institutions of the Palestine Liberation Organization, especially those of the Palestine National Council and the Palestinian Central Council, and in accordance, also, with the initiative of President Bush, which is based on the principles of land for peace, implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973),

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

and realization of the political rights of the Palestinian people and security for all States in the region. Until now, seven rounds in the bilateral talks and many more rounds of meetings in the multilateral talks have taken place.

"Yet, despite a year of persistent efforts we have made with all those who are faithful to the peace process and with the co-sponsors, we find that this year has passed without the achievement of any tangible progress on the road leading to peace, especially on the Palestinian track where, according to the letter of invitation, it was supposed that the first stage of negotiations would end, and the interim period would start and would be the transition that would lead to a permanent solution, which would include total Israeli withdrawal from our occupied terrotories, including Jerusalem, and the onset of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, to be enjoyed by our whole area and our peoples, and which would reflect positively on the issues of international security, stability, and peace as a whole.

"Regretfully, however, one principal factor has blocked progress on the Palestinian track - that is, that the Israeli side joined these negotiations with the aim of gaining time. This was openly declared by Mr. Yitzhak Shamir, former Prime Minister of Israel, immediately following the Israeli elections last June when he declared that his aim in joining the process was solely to gain time in order to enable Israel to confiscate and swallow up more Palestinian land under occupation and to build more Jewish settlements. Unfortunately, however, we find that the Government of Mr. Rabin pursues the same course as that of the

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

Government of Shamir, especially with regard to the Palestinian track. This is the reason behind the gradual withering away of the optimism found in certain circles after Mr. Rabin's success in the recent elections. Sheer facts prove also that the Government of Israel, by its procrastination and time-wasting on the Palestinian track, aims at consecrating an Israeli demographic and colonial fait accompli on the Palestinian occupied territories. Mr. Rabin was encouraged to continue on this course by the policies of the current United States Administration, which has provided Israel with $10 billion in loan guarantees and has assured Israel of maintaining its military edge in the region. Rabin returned from his visit to the United States to declare the building of 11,000 settlement units in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and 14,000 settlement units in Holy Jerusalem.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

"In parallel with the situation in these negotiations, the situation in the occupied territories is also rapidly deteriorating. The Israeli occupation authorities are continuing to exercise the policy of the iron fist in a brutal manner, carrying out arbitrary practices, beatings, detentions and killings, practising oppression, imposing siege and starvation on our Palestinian people, perpetrating various crimes in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and violating our people's basic human rights in all their aspects. In addition to all this, they are continuing deliberately to violate and desecrate Islamic and Christian holy places. Furthermore, the continual Israeli acts of aggression against south Lebanon and the Palestinian refugee camps there are increasing tension and creating an atmosphere that is not conducive to the march of peace, but rather are further complicating it.

"The whole world - and particularly the United Nations - knows that the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict lies in the Palestinian cause, and that progress on any other front in the absence of progress on the Palestinian front will not lead to a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. As I said in my speech before the General Assembly of the United Nations in November 1974,

'War flares up in Palestine, and yet it is in Palestine that peace will be born'. (A/PV.2282, p. 51)

"The Palestinian cause is at the core of peace, security and stability not only in Palestine but also in the world at large. This, however, does not mean that no progress should be made on any of the other fronts: on the contrary, it should be. That is why we have taken the initiative to set up coordination between all the Arab delegations in order to facilitate the peace process. Yet we should all be keen to make

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

make tangible progress on the Palestinian front, particularly because the attempts of Israel to ignore international legitimacy as a basis for this political settlement make it impossible to achieve tangible results in the peace process.

"A comprehensive solution requires, firstly, an Israeli commitment to international legitimacy. It also requires the sponsors of the conference and the international community - and especially the European Economic Community, China, Japan and the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement - to exert their best efforts to make Israel commit itself to respecting international legitimacy and carrying out United Nations resolutions, for international legitimacy is an indivisible whole.

"We in the Palestine Liberation Organization have contributed a sufficient degree of flexibility and provided the necessary facilities in the service of peace in the Middle East. Does the Israeli side have the desire to make a similar contribution to the march of peace, in respect of the Palestinians in particular?

"Further, since the legal terms of reference of this peace process are internatioral ones, we believe it is high time that the United Nations, alongside the sponsors of the peace process, played an effective role in solving the Arab-Israeli conflict, in accordance with its many resolutions calling for an international peace conference to be convened under its auspices, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and the parties directly concerned with peace in the Middle East, including the Palestine Liberation Organization on an equal footing with the other parties, especially since the year designated for the negotiations has passed without any progress on the Palestinian track.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

"In order for the United Nations to start making its required contribution, it must assume, forthwith, the responsibility for protecting our Palestinian people under occupation in accordance with its many relevant resolutions, in particular, Security Council resolutions 681 (1990) and 726 (1992). The Secretary-General of the United Nations must undoubtedly play a role of outstanding importance in ensuring that all the organs of the United Nations themselves play a more active role in this, particularly the Security Council, which is able to adopt binding resolutions as it is the principal organ concerned with the maintenance of peace and security world wide.

"Despite the fact that the process of negotiations has reached a deadlock, I should like to assure you that our Palestinian people are more than ever before determined to continue seeking to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the area. For us, achieving this peace is not only a position or a policy which changes under changing conditions; it is a question of principle and an act of faith.

"Yet this just and comprehensive peace cannot be achieved by continuing the Israeli occupation of our land and of the Islamic and Christian holy places. That is why our people's struggle will continue, as will their blessed intifadah, wave after wave, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, their sole legitimate representative, until our Palestinian people are able to regain and exercise their inalienable national rights, including their right to return, to self-determination and to establish their independent State with Holy Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international legitimacy.

"On this day when the world expresses its solidarity with our

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

Palestinian people, I should like to reiterate the solidarity of our Palestinian people and of the Palestine Liberation Organization with all peoples struggling to achieve their freedom, independence and sovereignty. I should also like to affirm that we are for a world dominated by peace, security and tranquillity and free of regional conflicts; such conflicts, should they arise, should be solved through dialogue and understanding on the basis of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and equal opportunities for all.

"I should like to assure you that we stand alongside the fraternal people of Somalia in overcoming their plight. We support enabling the United Nations and its agencies to carry out their roles in alleviating this plight and providing help to the fraternal people of Somalia.

"We stand behind the fraternal people of Iraq and favour maintaining their country's territorial integrity. We support lifting the embargo imposed on them and on their children and providing them with the necessary foodstuffs and medical and other supplies.

"We also stand with the fraternal people of Libya and call for lifting the embargo imposed on them, and for solving the problem with fraternal Libya through dialogue and understanding.

"We affirm here, also, our support for the struggle of the peoples of South Africa to regain their freedom and sovereignty, and to achieve justice and equality in their country. We do indeed appreciate the leading role of brother Nelson Mandela and his blessed efforts in working for the realization of national and human rights for the people of South Africa. We also appreciate the major militant efforts of the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, and of all the democratic forces in South Africa.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

"I have always called for solving the existing conflicts between the republics of former Yugoslavia in a spirit of dialogue and understanding concomitant with the historical relations of cooperation which existed during their recent history. The destruction, killings, deportations and the violations of the rights of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina must be deplored and condemned. The policy of 'ethnic cleansing' in particular cannot be tolerated in an age which calls for harmony, cooperation and coexistence between peoples. The United Nations has important responsibilities and a great role to play in the maintenance of peace, and not only in terms of maintaining peace in the area but also in terms of safeguarding those human lives that are now being lost with every passing day.

"Finally, I should like to reiterate my deepest thanks and highest appreciation for the support and solidarity which all members display on the side of the just struggle of our people. I wish members all success in carrying out the noble duties assigned to the Committee so that it can contribute to achieving a just and lasting peace in our area through restoring our people's inalienable national rights and enabling our people to exercise them".

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I thank Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine, and ask him to convey our thanks to President Yasser Arafat and, through him, assure the Palestinian people of our Committee's unwavering determination to continue and intensify its efforts within its terms of reference to contribute to the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine that will enable the Palestinian people to exercise, as soon as possible, its inalienable national rights.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I call now on His Excellency Mr. Stanley Kalpagé of Sri Lanka, Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka), Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories: First, Mr. Chairman, I wish to express my thanks to you and to the other members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for inviting me to take part in this solemn observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

On behalf of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and on my own behalf, I have the honour to convey this message on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Since its establishment by the General Assembly in 1968, the Special Committee has always endeavoured to provide in its reports a faithful and accurate picture of the situation of human rights in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. This year, as in the past, the Special Committee was precluded from visiting the occupied territories to examine the situation in situ and to hear the position of the Israeli authorities directly responsible for the issues dealt with in the Special Committee's reports. The Special Committee has nevertheless tried to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it in the best possible way by reflecting in its report relevant information concerning the human rights situation in the occupied territories,

(Mr. Kalpagé, Chairman, Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories)

received from a wide range of sources both orally and in writing. The Special Committee has taken particular care to rely on information that has not been contradicted by the Government of Israel, including reports appearing in the Israeli press and other news media published in the occupied territories.

Having examined and analysed the information and evidence placed before it, the Special Committee has reached the conclusion, as reflected in its twenty-fourth report to the General Assembly, submitted at the current session, that the situation of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms in the occupied territories has continued to be extremely serious and remains a threat to international peace and security.

The peace process that began with the Madrid Conference does not seem to have yet had a significant effect on the overall enjoyment of human rights by the population of the occupied territories. The hardships faced by the population in the occupied territories derive from the fact that occupation itself constitutes a violation of human rights and engenders a situation where human rights violations will occur.

The Special Committee hopes that the ongoing peace negotiations will bring about a climate of confidence and mutual trust that will be conducive to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict. We trust that such a settlement will take into account the

(Mr. Kalpagé, Chairman, Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories)

rights of all peoples in the area, including the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories.

Let me take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to extend to you and to the other members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People the best wishes of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories for the success of your commendable endeavours in the cause of peace in the Middle East.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I call on His Excellency Mr. Nugroho Wisnumurti, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, who will read out a message from His Excellency Mr. Soeharto, President of the Republic of Indonesia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Tenth Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia): It is a distinct privilege for me to read out a message from His Excellency Mr. Soeharto, President of the Republic of Indonesia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, on the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The message reads as follows:

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

"On the solemn occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I would like, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, to reaffirm our unflinching support for the struggle of the Palestinian people in attaining their cherished objectives of peace, freedom and justice. This year's observance coincides with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the occupation by Israel of Palestinian and other Arab territories. Yet a quarter-century of occupation and oppression has not weakened their determination to attain their cherished objectives. Rather, they have strengthened the resolve of the valiant Palestinians to resist occupation and to regain and exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination and statehood.

"The initiation of the Middle East peace process has therefore raised our hopes for a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, with the Palestinian question at the core. The Movement was particularly gratified that Palestinian representatives are participating in the ongoing negotiations with other concerned States, which is a belated recognition of their political and national identity, thus achieving yet another historic stride towards the materialization of the already proclaimed Palestinian State. But since its inaugural meeting in Madrid during October 1991, these talks have failed to show any tangible results. While the representatives of Palestine and of Arab States participating in this endeavour have adopted a rational and balanced approach, Israel's seeming flexibility has masked its rigid position of refusing to negotiate even the possibility of withdrawing from the illegally occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip. Thus, Israel's unilateral interpretation of Security Council

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

resolution 242 (1967), which upholds the principle of land for peace, and its consequent refusal to withdraw from occupied territories, have injected a new and more disturbing element that threatens to undermine the peace process. Israel should therefore be called upon to contribute to the ongoing search for peace by according the right to self-determination to the Palestinian people, observing international treaties and conventions and implementing United Nations resolutions and decisions.

"The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries supports the call given by the Palestinian National Council (PNC) for the universal recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, we endorse the basic positions taken by the PNC for a freeze on settlements, the disengagement of Israel from occupied territories, the modalities for elections, an interim administration to assume control over all aspects of life in the occupied territories and for the transition period to lead to the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian State.

"We are deeply concerned over Israel's persistence in its policies of settlements and expansion through demographic, cultural and social changes and the continuing denial of the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, including the increasing imposition of harsh collective punishment and other repressive measures. What is therefore urgently required is the implementation of Security Council resolution 681 (1991) to ensure the safety and protection of Palestinians under occupation through the establishment of a properly mandated United Nations presence.

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

"For the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, the achievement of a lasting solution to the question of Palestine remains a priority objective. They also remain steadfast in their commitment to a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict based on the unconditional withdrawal of Israel from occupied territories.

"The Declaration issued by the Movement's Committee on Palestine during the Tenth Summit Meeting of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Jakarta last September, calls for the continuing responsibility of the United Nations on the question of Palestine. It also reaffirms the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions, particularly the resolutions of the Security Council, as providing a viable basis for the achievement of a comprehensive, just and durable peace in the region.

"Finally, the non-aligned countries fully support the activities of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and will continue to extend their cooperation in achieving our common goal."

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I now call on Ambassador Tahsin Burcuoğlu of Turkey, who will read a message from His Excellency Mr. Hikmet Çetin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, in his capacity as Chairman of the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.

Mr. BURCUOĞLU (Turkey): I have the honour to read the message of His Excellency Mr. Hikmet Çetin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and Chairman of the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, dated 19 November 1992.

(Mr. Burcuoğlu, Turkey)

"On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, it is a pleasure for me, as the Chairman of the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, to reaffirm our constant support for the Palestinian people in their continuing struggle to attain their legitimate rights, including that of self-determination and that of establishing an independent State of their own.

"As is well known, since its inception, the Palestinian people have remained at the centre of the concerns of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The noble struggle of the Palestinian people for their inalienable rights has always enjoyed the support of the totality of the membership of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. This support has been forthcoming because the Palestinian struggle has been a just struggle for principles that are embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. The wide support for Palestinian rights has also been based on the firm belief that peace and security in the Middle East are dependent on justice being done to the Palestinian people.

"We in the Organization of the Islamic Conference, reaffirm that peace will not prevail in the Middle East unless and until Israel withdraws from all occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and unless the Palestinian cause, considered in the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is solved in the context of an overall and just settlement in the region.

"Furthernore, we consider that the settlements established by Israel are illegal and that it is necessary to provide international guarantees for their removal in accordance with the resolutions of international legality, including Security Council resolution 465 (1980).

(Mr. Burcuoğlu, Turkey)

"It is in this context that we evaluate the Middle East Peace Conference as a historic opportunity for reaching a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on the resolutions of international legality, including resolutions 242 (1967), 325 (1973) and 338 (1973).

"We, in the Organization of the Islamic Council, are closely following the developments taking place in the Middle East Peace Conference. We have both expressed support for the ongoing Middle East Peace Conference and called upon the co-sponsors of the Conference to use their influence with Israel to persuade it to refrain from hindering the peace process and put an end to its aggressions and its repressive practices against the Palestinians, so as to ensure the continuation of the peace process and make substantial progress in the peace talks.

"On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, as the Chairman of the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, I am also pleased to commend the persistent efforts made by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to promote a wider awareness of the question of Palestine and thus contribute to fostering stronger sympathy and support in the international community for the legitimate cause of the Palestinian people.

"On behalf of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, on this occasion, I want to recall the unwavering support and complete solidarity of the Organization of the Islamic Conference with the Palestinian people.

"It is our most sincere wish to see this gifted people, the

(Mr. Burcuoğlu, Turkey)

Palestinians, enjoying the blessings of peace, freedom, security and self-determination. We salute their struggle and reiterate our full support."

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I next call on Mr. Mahmoud Aboul-Nasr, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States, who will read a message from His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

Mr. ABOUL-NASR (League of Arab States) (interpretation from Arabic): It is my privilege to convey to you, Sir, the following message of Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People:

"It is a pleasure for me to communicate with you as we commemorate, together with many of the world's peoples and Governments, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, reaffirming our faith in the justice of their cause and their constant struggle to obtain their inalienable rights, the foremost of which is the right to self-determination.

"When in 1947 the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II) - known as the "partition resolution" - the States that supported it did not question the right of the Palestinian people to establish its own independent State on its national soil. Since the outbreak of the struggle for hegemony over the territory of Palestine, the Palestinian people have made many sacrifices in defence of their right to independence and successfully resisted all the pressure aimed at expelling them from their homes.

"After the 1948 disaster, the overwhelming majority of the Palestinian people experienced much bitterness and frustration. When Israel occupied territory far in excess of that allotted to it under the partition resolution, the Palestinian people found that the United Nations response was to grant membership to Israel and at the same time to transform their cause into a mere question of refugees. Moreover, despite the approval by the representative of the Israeli Government of the 1949 Lausanne protocols, which deals with respect for the boundaries

(Mr. Aboul-Nasr, League of Arab States)

established by the partition resolution and adherence to the principle of return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes, Israel went back on its word and ignored its commitments. The United Nations mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, could not but describe that development as an affront to the principles of justice, for it embodies the judgement of perpetual banishment of the Arabs who had been firmly rooted in that territory for centuries.

"The sufferings, both past and present, of the Palestinian people have neither impaired their confidence in themselves and the justice of their cause nor made them lose hope for a better future; on the contrary, they have continued their struggle and endowed their revolution with all their material and human potential with a view to obtaining their legitimate rights.

"The Palestinian revolution has met with every type of repression and inhuman practice condemned by the four 1949 Geneva Conventions. Successive attempts to crush it have failed. At every stage of its development, it has to strive tirelessly to re-energize the Palestinians in order to enable them to face the various challenges. The Palestinian revolution has succeeded in creating many productive, scientific and educational establishments and broadened its efforts to include the fields of social welfare and the revival of its people's cultural heritage. The peoples of the entire world sided with the Palestinian people in its just cause, and in November 1974 the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3237 (XXIX), affirming the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference and its right to national independence and sovereignty in

(Mr. Aboul-Nasr, League of Arab States)

the same manner as the other peoples of the world and granting the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the status of United Nations observer.

"The past four decades have amply demonstrated that any effort to achieve peace in the region will be in vain or of limited effect if it fails to concentrate on a practical solution acceptable to the Palestinian people - one that is based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) - and that a double-standard policy in the Middle East will only further complicate the situation. Today, after more than a year of peace negotiations, we can say that the Palestinian side has shown its ability to deal with international developments in full awareness of the fact that peace has its own requirements. The objectivity and earnestness with which the Palestinian side submitted its positions has played a role in mobilizing greater support from those Powers that have international influence. On the other side, however, the Israeli negotiators - during the Likud administration - have continued to shift and procrastinate in order to gain time and postpone a settlement. Even Yitzhak Shamir himself acknowledged, after his fall from power in the recent Israeli elections, that it had been his intention to draw out the negotiations for more than 10 years or until the settlement of the rest of the occupied Arab territories was complete.

"Many had expected the Israeli negotiators' attitude to change after the Labour Party came into power. It is obvious, however, that what has been proposed by Yitzhak Rabin and the coalition parties in power with him until now is more closely related to public relations campaigns than

(Mr. Aboul-Nasr, League of Arab States)

it is to a genuine plan for achieving that peace towards which all the peoples of the region aspire, first and foremost the Israeli people, who will be the first to benefit from the establishment of a lasting, just peace in the Middle East.

"All the people of the region aspire to peace. We all abide by the principles of the United Nations Charter and are committed to the principles of international law and international legitimacy. Hence we should be able to build a new world order that will respect the interests and ensure the rights of all peoples.

"My best wishes to you in achieving success in your humanitarian mission."

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I now call on Mr. Hassan Ali Hussain Al-Ni'mah, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations, to make a statement as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of December.

Mr. AL-NI'MAH (Qatar), Chairman of the Group of Arab States (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the Group of Arab States in New York, it is a pleasure for me to extend to you all our gratitude for the most commendable efforts being made by the Committee in support of the cause of the Palestinian people, which is struggling to recover its inalienable rights.

Speaking on behalf of my colleagues in the Arab Group and on my own behalf, I wish to thank you all for those efforts, given the circumstances in which the Palestinian people are defending their rights. I should also like to thank Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali for his commendable efforts with regard to the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions and respect for the Charter.

(Mr. Al-Ni'mah, Chairman,
Group of Arab States)

Indeed, we in the Arab Group all hail your efforts. We praise the steps you are taking and hope that they will be pursued. We also hope to see a mobilization of those forces of justice to back the Palestinian cause in the just struggle to recover the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return and the right to self-determination and the creation of its own independent State, with the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The Palestinian people, under the legitimate leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, has continued its historic struggle to achieve the implementation of United Nations resolutions for a just and lasting settlement.

On the occasion of the fifteenth observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I have the honour to convey to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the following message from His Highness the Emir of Qatar:

"Once again a meeting is being held to proclaim the solidarity of peoples of the world with the Palestinian people in its just cause. As a peace- and justice-loving people, I should like to take this opportunity to reiterate our dedication to freedom, which the Palestinian people must also enjoy as do all other peoples of the world.

"Since the observance of this Day last year, the peace negotiations have not made any progress towards guaranteeing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, owing to Israel's stubbornness and its persistence in clinging to outmoded concepts that are incompatible with today's world.

(Mr. Al-Ni'mah, Chairman, Group of Arab States)

"The Arab side has accepted the principle of two States on the historic soil of Palestine; it has also accepted that the principle of Israeli security be taken into consideration. Hence the Israeli side has no cause to continue in its obstinacy and refusal to accept the resolutions. With the acceptance of these two points, there are other aspects which could be settled in the negotiations under way in the current peace process. We are optimistic concerning the peace process. We hope that it will be reactivated with the coming of a new American Administration next January. But we wish to issue a warning that the peace process might turn into a goal in itself and that the fact that attempts are being made to achieve this result might move us away from the principles of the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on the recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people, withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and guaranteeing the peace and security of all States of the region. The peace process can continue only if tangible results are achieved. We urge the parties to the negotiations to take this into consideration, so that this historic opportunity will not be missed and an end may be put to a conflict which has lasted for more than half a century and resulted in the loss of many lives and of countless human and material resources.

"Qatar reaffirms its support for the uprising of the Palestinian people and for its continued resistance to Israeli occupation and Israeli practices, which have been condemned by the United Nations and by international public opinion. We are confident that this people that have suffered so long will finally recover its inalienable rights and enjoy freedom and independence in the near future.

(Mr. Al-Ni'mah, Chairman, Group of Arab States)

"In conclusion, I should like to express to you, Sir, my gratitude for the work of your Committee and for the efforts made to support the Palestinian cause and to make the peoples of the world appreciate the true dimensions of that cause. This will help in increasing the base of international support for that cause. We hope that in the near future we will be able to achieve a just settlement of the problem of the Palestinian people that would sanctify these inalienable rights in a just and lasting peace and have positive consequences for all the peoples of the Middle East.

"We wish the Committee ever greater success in carrying out its noble task."

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): It is now my pleasure to call on Ms. Colleen McGuire, representative of the International Coordinating Committee for Non- Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine.

Ms. McGUIRE (International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine): On behalf of the Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations, Mr. Don Betz, and on behalf of approximately 1,300 international non-governmental organizations, I thank the United Nations for again organizing this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and for inviting the non-governmental organization community to participate in today's ceremony.

Guided by the Palestinian people, non-governmental organizations are the grass-roots voice of the struggle for a just and peaceful resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. I wish to inform the Committee of three of the

(Ms. McGuire, International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine)

many and various activities non-governmental organizations have undertaken this past year.

Through our Peace Conference Information Project, the non-governmental organization community has received first-hand coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. The in-depth analyses of our correspondent Phyllis Bennis are distributed to non-governmental organizations throughout the world. The project offers an invaluable alternative perspective to the minimal and often-distorted coverage of the mainstream media.

(Ms. McGuire, International Lawyers Guild, USA)

The North American NGOs' Fax Tree disseminates urgent action alerts to the NGO network regarding human rights violations in the occupied territories, threats to Palestinian organizations and shifts in occupation policy. In the past year, 32 urgent action alerts went out to approximately 120 non-governmental organizations. Recently the Israeli Government ordered the eviction of the Arab villagers of Ramya, inside Israel, so that incoming Russian Jews could settle on lands the Ramyans have lived on for generations. Faxes from non-governmental organizations prompted the United States State Department to call the United States Embassy in Tel Aviv, which in turn spoke to Israeli officials. Owing in part to protests by non-governmental organizations, the Israeli Government appears to be backing down from displacing the Ramyans, although I should say that that issue is not as yet fully settled.

Our latest Fax-Tree alert is directed against the University of New Haven in Connecticut. On 23 November 1992 the University held a press conference to announce the opening of a branch of its school in the West Bank settlement of El Kana. Non-governmental organizations have begun to bombard New Haven with faxes explaining the illegality of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.

On 27 October 1992 the trial of two Palestinians accused of "terrorist activity" began in Los Angeles. Immigration authorities argue that whoever raises funds for an organization deemed "terrorist" is subject to deportation, even when moneys are raised solely for lawful humanitarian ends, such as schools or day-care centres. The trial is currently focusing on whether the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) is a "terrorist organization". It is startling that a court of law would examine what is

(Ms. McGuire, International Lawyers Guild, USA)

essentially a political question. Alarmed by the ramifications of this case and by the fact that the United States Government has targeted Palestinians to test its self-serving definition of the term "terrorism", United States non-governmental organizations organized a letter campaign to United States Attorney-General William Barr asking him to drop the charges. Approximately 100 organizations signed on to the Barr letter. We are also sending a letter to President-elect Bill Clinton requesting that his Administration cease prosecuting this McCarthyite case.

Those are a few of the activities non-governmental organizations undertook in 1992 and which we will follow up in 1993.

Now, I wish to say a little about the year 1992. It is an anniversary year for two peoples struggling for self-determination. It marks the 500th year of European settlement on Native American lands. It also marks the twenty-fifth year of Israeli occupation of Palestinian land in the West Bank and Gaza. Native American and Palestinian sovereignty struggles share a key feature. Both peoples have resided on their respective lands for centuries, and both peoples lost the bulk of their lands to European settler-colonial States with little or no compensation.

Just as Native Americans are indigenous to the Americas, so too are Palestinians indigenous to historic Palestine. Although throughout history Jews have maintained a presence in Palestine, it cannot be said that the Jewish people, per se, are indigenous to that area. Apart from Biblical times, their numbers had always been negligible relative to the Palestinian population.

Compared to the history of European settlement in the Americas, only recently did historic Palestine acquire a massive European presence. It began

(Ms. McGuire, International Lawyers Guild, USA)

when Eastern European Jews immigrated to Palestine in the 1880s and culminated with a flood of European Jewish refugees around the time of the Second World War. As a result of United Nations resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, these European settlers and refugees acquired sovereignty over 57 per cent of historic Palestine. An additional 20 per cent of historic Palestine was captured by the new State of Israel in the 1948 war. The remaining 23 per cent of historic Palestine has been occupied by Israel since June of 1967.

Native Americans and Palestinians both seek to recover lands held illegally or taken fraudulently by foreign nations. Native Americans currently exercise a limited form of sovereignty over a mere 2.5 per cent of their original two-billion-acre land base, having lost 97.5 per cent of their land to European settlers. Palestinians currently exercise no sovereignty over any part of their original land base, most particularly over lands illegally occupied since 1967.

Some may think litigation a quixotic pursuit for American Indians, given an inherent impartiality of courts controlled by the expropriating Power. Yet a recent settlement giving the Hopi Nation 400,000 acres of land underscores the United States Government's ability,

"if it chooses to do so, to give public land, for example national parks, to the Indians". (The New York Times, 25 November 1992).

That victory is good news for other Indian land claims pending in federal courts, but it also serves to embolden and strengthen all indigenous land struggles.

Palestinians, unlike Native Americans, have no legal forum to adjudicate their land rights. They are forced to pursue their land and sovereignty

(Ms. McGuire, International Lawyers Guild, USA)

rights through negotiations engineered by the United States. Again, hardly an impartial mediator, given that the United States Government subsidizes the Israeli Government with over $3 billion a year. In 1988 the Palestine National Council (PNC) demanded the withdrawal of Israel from territories it occupies and declared those territories an independent Palestinian State. International law is unequivocally on the side of the Declaration by the PNC. It is only a matter of when - not if - the United States and its client State, Israel, accept and apply the enshrined principles of the law of nations to the Palestinian people.

White people of European origin exercise inordinate control over the indigenous people of the United States and occupied Palestine. Let us be clear that it is white European Jews, known as Ashkenazims, who have always held power in Israel. Non-white Jews, whom I call Jews of colour, from North Africa, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Ethiopia and so forth, are relegated to the lower rungs of Israeli society, although they are not as oppressed as Israeli Arabs. Israeli policies, formed largely by white Jews, blatantly deny Palestinians fundamental human rights, especially self-determination. Such discriminating policies arise from a racism that many whites, be they Israeli or American, have long held towards peoples of colour whose lands they coveted and aggressively, if not illegally, acquired.

In 1992 Native Americans demonstrated their righteous resistance to 500 years of genocide and European settlement on their lands. In 1992 Palestinians heroically endured a quarter century of a brutal military and foreign occupation of their lands. Only through full and complete sovereignty, which must include Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza and a voting seat at the United Nations, can Palestinians look back on 1992 as an anniversary year worthy of celebration.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): It is now my honour to announce that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has received, in addition to those already read out, messages of support and solidarity from many Heads of State and Government, from Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Governments and organizations, and I shall now read out a list of those messages. The texts of the messages will be published in a special bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

(The Chairman)

The following is the list of messages we have received.

From Heads of State: His Excellency Mr. Burhanuddin Rabbani, President of the Supreme Council of the Islamic State of Afghanistan; His Highness Sheikh Isa Bin Sulman Al-Khalifa, Emir of the State of Bahrain; His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaoré, President of the Council of Ministers of Burkina Faso; His Royal Highness Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State and President of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia; His Excellency Mr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Council of State and Government of the Republic of Cuba; His Excellency Mr. George Vassiliou, President of the Republic of Cyprus; His Excellency Mr. Kim Il Sung, President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt; His Excellency Brigadier General Lansana Conté, President of the Republic of Guinea; His Majesty King Hussein Bin Talal, King of the Hachemite Kingdom of Jordan; His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives; His Excellency Mr. Boris N. Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation; His Highness King Fahd Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Guardian of the Two Holy Sanctuaries and King of Saudi Arabia; His Excellency Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal; His Excellency Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka; His Excellency Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname; His Excellency Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia; His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda; His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates; and His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdallah Saleh, President of the Republic of Yemen;

(The Chairman)

From Heads of Government: His Excellency Mr. M. Aleksander Maksi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania; Her Excellency Mrs. Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; His Excellency Mr. Li Peng, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China; His Excellency Mr. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of India; His Excellency Mr. Khamtay Siphandone, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; Datuk Seri Mr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia; His Excellency Mr. Edward Fenech Adams, Prime Minister of Malta; His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; His Excellency Mr. Felipe Gonzalez, President of the Government of Spain; Mr. Chuan Leekpai, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand; His Excellency Mr. Süleyman Demirel, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey; His Excellency Mr. Vo Van Kiet, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam;

From Ministers for Foreign Affairs: His Excellency Mr. Diego Paredes, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ecuador; His Excellency Mr. Michael G. Papaconstantinou, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Greece; His Excellency Mr. Geza Jeszenszky, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Hungary; His Excellency Mr. Lee Sang-Ock, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea; His Excellency Mr. Fares Boueiz, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lebanon; His Excellency Mr. Omar Mustafa Muntasser, Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya; and His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Abderahmane Ould Moyne, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania; His Excellency Mr. Farouq Al-Sharaa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic; His Excellency Mr. Anatoly M. Zlenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

(The Chairman)

The Committee has also received a message from His Excellency Mr. Hamid Algabid, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The Committee has received a message from Mr. Federico Mayor, Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations.

The following non-governmental organizations have sent us messages: the European Committee for Coordination of Non-governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine; the General Union of Palestinian Women; the International League of Women for Peace and Freedom; the Indo-Arab Islamic Youth Association; the Union of Palestinian American Women; Instituto de Estudios Islámicos; the African Alliance of Christian Unions of Young People; The Soviet Antizionist Committee; the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding; the International Organization of Journalists; and the Tunisian General Workers' Union.

A message has been received from the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania.

On behalf of the entire Committee I should like to express sincere appreciation to Heads of State or Government, Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Governments, the organizations that I have just listed and all participants for their constant efforts towards securing a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and their steadfast support for the objectives and activities of the Committee.

The statements that we have heard and the messages of solidarity that we have received today demonstrate once again the determination of the international community to progress towards the establishment of peace in the Middle East through the achievement of the inalienable national rights of the

(The Chairman)

Palestinian people, based on United Nations resolutions. I can give an assurance that we the members of the Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will spare no effort towards achieving these objectives.

I now have pleasure in calling on Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, Head of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Mr. KADDOUMI (Palestine) (interpretation from Arabic): At the conclusion of this observance I should like to extend my deep thanks to Mr. Ganev, President of the General Assembly, to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and to Mr. Erdös, President of the Security Council, for their participation in this meeting in commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

I should like also to express our appreciation and thanks to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for your efforts on behalf of the Palestinian people and your endeavours to secure a just solution to the question of Palestine.

(Mr. Kaddoumi, Palestine)

The appreciation of the Palestine Liberation Organization also goes to all friendly Heads of State and Government who sent messages of congratulation on this occasion. In this respect, I should like to pay a tribute to the important and historic role played by the United Nations in providing an atmosphere conducive to finding a solution to this problem and for the assistance extended to our Palestinian people in exile and in the occupied territories. We hope that these efforts will also be extended to an effective international protection for our Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

This international Organization will always remain the natural forum for dealing with this and other international questions. All oppressed peoples come to this Organization with their questions and problems because they consider the United Nations to be the only instrument capable of helping them to achieve their independence. The United Nations will remain the appropriate forum for dealing with the question of Palestine. It will remain the principal dynamic engine providing a context in which to address the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and the only frame of reference on which all efforts can be hung, particularly those made in the progress towards peace that began with the Madrid Conference last year.

We are hopeful that the United Nations will assume the role for which it was founded - that of establishing peace and security throughout the world and of helping oppressed peoples to break the shackles of oppression. The opportunity is ripe to do so, now that humanity is witnessing the end of cold-war conflicts throughout the world and the dawn of a new era.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): Before adjourning this solemn meeting, I wish to thank all those who made it made it possible for us to organize this Day, in particular the members of the Division for

(The Chairman)

Palestinian Rights, the Office of Conference Services and the Department of Public Information, not to mention all those who work behind the scenes to see to our security.

I remind all participants that the exhibit arranged by the Office of the Permanent Observer of Palestine under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people will be formally opened at 2.45 p.m. in the lobby of the General Assembly Building.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.